Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1, 11, 14, 26, 65, 69, 179, and 180 have been amended herein. Please note that all claims currently pending and under consideration in the referenced application are shown below. Please enter these claims as amended. New independent claims 189 through 193 are presented herein, which substantially correspond to original claims 5, 53, 63, 65, and 73, respectively, each rewritten in independent form. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please cancel claims 10, 78 through 178, 187, and 188 without prejudice to the filing of one or more divisional applications including same.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion, at least a portion of the inner profile configured to substantially correspond to a drilling profile of another drilling tool for subsequently drilling through a portion of the casing bit;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries one or more cutting elements affixed thereto; and

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit.

2. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the casing bit comprises steel.

3. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the outer profile of the casing bit exhibits an inverted cone geometry.

4. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein at least one of the one or more cutting elements are selected from the group consisting of a polycrystalline diamond cutting element, a thermally stable diamond cutting element, a natural diamond cutting element, and a tungsten carbide cutting element.

5. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein:

the one or more cutting elements comprise a first plurality of cutting elements and a second plurality of cutting elements;

the first plurality of cutting elements is configured to initially engage and drill through a selected region; and

the second plurality of cutting elements is configured to engage and drill through a region to be subsequently encountered by the casing bit.

6. (Original) The casing bit of claim 5, wherein each of the first plurality of cutting elements comprise a tungsten carbide cutting element and each of the second plurality of cutting elements comprise a polycrystalline diamond cutting element.

7. (Original) The casing bit of claim 6, wherein the first plurality of cutting elements exhibits greater exposure than the second plurality of cutting elements.

8. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising an integral stem section extending longitudinally from the nose portion of the casing bit.

9. (Original) The casing bit of claim 8, wherein the integral stem section comprises at least one of a frangible region, a float valve mechanism, a cementing stage tool, a float collar mechanism, or a landing collar structure.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The casing bit of ~~claim 10~~claim 1, wherein at least a portion of ~~at least one of the inner profile and~~ the outer profile of the casing bit substantially corresponds to the drilling profile of the drilling tool.

12. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the casing bit is configured to fail in response to pressure acting on an interior surface thereof.

13. (Original) The casing bit of claim 12, wherein the at least a portion of the casing bit configured to fail is sized and configured to transmit cement therethrough.

14. (Currently Amended) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the average distance between the inner profile and the outer profile of the casing bit is selected in relation to a maximum predicted stress, the maximum predicted stress predicted in relation to expected forces of operating the casing bit to drill ~~a casing~~ the casing section into ~~a subterranean~~ the subterranean formation.

15. (Original) The casing bit of claim 14, wherein the casing bit comprises a material having a yield stress that is at least one and one half times the maximum predicted stress.

16. (Original) The casing bit of claim 10, wherein the one or more cutting elements comprise a plurality of cutting elements;
wherein a first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is disposed generally within the at least a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through;
wherein a second portion of the plurality of cutting elements is disposed generally peripheral to the at least a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through; and
wherein a majority of cutting elements of the first portion is configured differently than a majority of cutting elements of the second portion.

17. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16, wherein a size of the majority of the first

portion of the plurality of cutting elements is smaller than a size of the majority of cutting elements of the second portion.

18. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16,

wherein each of the plurality of cutting elements contains an amount of abrasive material; and

wherein an average amount of the abrasive material contained by each of the cutting elements of the first portion is less than an average amount of the abrasive material contained by each of the plurality of cutting elements of the second portion.

19. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16, wherein a majority of the first portion of cutting elements is substantially carbide-free.

20. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16, wherein each of the plurality of cutting elements comprises a polycrystalline diamond cutting element.

21. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16, wherein at least one of the plurality of cutting elements generally within the at least a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through comprises a first grade of cutting element relating to at least one inherent quality related to wear characteristics, and at least one of the plurality of cutting elements generally peripheral to the at least a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through comprises a second grade of cutting element relating to at least one inherent quality related to wear characteristics, wherein the at least one inherent quality of the second grade of cutting element is generally different than the at least one inherent quality of the first grade of cutting element.

22. (Original) The casing bit of claim 21, wherein the at least one inherent quality related to wear characteristics of the first grade of cutting element is generally inferior to the at least one inherent quality related to wear characteristics of the second grade of cutting element.

23. (Original) The casing bit of claim 16, wherein a majority of the first portion of cutting elements comprises an abrasive selected from the group consisting of carbide, natural diamond, and synthetic diamond, wherein the abrasive is sized and configured to substantially wear away in response to drilling through a selected formation region.

24. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising one or more wear knots disposed on at least one of the plurality of blades.

25. (Original) The casing bit of claim 24, wherein the one or more wear knots are sized and configured to minimize at least one of torque fluctuations while drilling and rate-of-penetration fluctuations while drilling.

26. (Currently Amended) The casing bit of claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~wherein ~~a total bearing area and at least one cutting element secured to a selected portion of the casing bit, the at least one superabrasive cutter~~ at least one cutting element of the one or more cutting elements ~~exhibiting~~ exhibits a limited amount of cutter exposure perpendicular to ~~the selected portion of the~~ a face of the ~~casing bit~~blade to which the ~~at least one superabrasive cutter~~at least one cutting element is ~~secured to;~~affixed, and wherein ~~the~~ a total bearing area of the casing bit is configured to limit a maximum depth-of-cut of the at least one cutting element into the formation during drilling.

27. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the casing bit comprises an abrasive dispersed within a metal binder.

28. (Original) The casing bit of claim 27, wherein the abrasive comprises at least one of carbide, natural diamond, and synthetic diamond.

29. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising a coating disposed on at least a portion of the exterior of the casing bit.

30. (Original) The casing bit of claim 29, wherein the coating is formulated to inhibit adhesion between formation cuttings and the casing bit.

31. (Original) The casing bit of claim 30, wherein the coating comprises a polymer.

32. (Original) The casing bit of claim 29, wherein the coating is formulated to inhibit at least one of erosion, abrasion, and wear to the casing bit.

33. (Original) The casing bit of claim 32, wherein the coating comprises diamond.

34. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of blades extends generally radially outwardly in a generally spiral fashion from a central axis of the casing bit to the radial outer extent thereof.

35. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein each of the at least one gage sections of each blade extend longitudinally from the nose portion of the casing bit in a generally helical fashion.

36. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising at least one rotationally trailing groove formed in at least one of the plurality of blades.

37. (Original) The casing bit of claim 36, wherein the at least one rotationally trailing groove follows at least one of a tangential path and a circumferential path relative to the direction of rotation of the casing bit.

38. (Original) The casing bit of claim 36, wherein the at least one rotationally trailing groove exhibits at least one of a substantially constant width along a direction of rotation of the casing bit and a tapered geometry in which the width of the at least one rotationally trailing

groove increases along a direction of rotation of the casing bit.

39. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the at least one aperture comprises a retention structure.

40. (Original) The casing bit of claim 39, further comprising at least one of a nozzle and a sleeve disposed within and affixed to the retention structure.

41. (Original) The casing bit of claim 40, wherein at least a portion of the at least one of a nozzle and a sleeve is configured to be removed in relation to an expected amount of erosion.

42. (Original) The casing bit of claim 40, wherein the at least one of a nozzle and a sleeve is affixed to the retention structure via at least one of welding, brazing, and engagement of threaded surfaces.

43. (Original) The casing bit of claim 40, wherein the at least one of the nozzle and the sleeve comprise one or more of tungsten carbide, ceramic, steel, aluminum, bronze, and brass.

44. (Original) The casing bit of claim 40, wherein the at least one of a nozzle and a sleeve is replaceable.

45. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising at least one rolling cone affixed to the nose portion of the casing bit.

46. (Original) The casing bit of claim 10, wherein the one or more cutting elements comprise a plurality of cutting elements;
wherein a first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is disposed generally within the at least

a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through;

wherein a second portion of the plurality of cutting elements is disposed generally peripheral to the at least a portion of the casing bit that is configured to be drilled through; and

wherein at least a majority of the first portion of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one blade of the casing bit differently than at least a majority of the second portion of plurality of cutting elements.

47. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein the at least a majority of the first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one blade of the casing bit by an adhesive.

48. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein the at least a majority of the first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one blade of the casing bit by a solder.

49. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by an adhesive.

50. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by a solder.

51. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein the at least a majority of the first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by electrically disbonding material.

52. (Original) The casing bit of claim 51, further comprising:

a conductor extending to and in electrical communication with each of the at least a majority of the first portion of cutting elements affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by electrically disbonding material; and

wherein each conductor is electrically insulated from the casing bit.

53. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by electrically disbonding material.

54. (Original) The casing bit of claim 53, further comprising:

a conductor extending to and in electrical communication with the one or more cutting elements affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by electrically disbonding material;

wherein the conductor is electrically insulated from the casing bit.

55. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein the at least a majority of the first portion of the plurality of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by a fastening element extending therethrough.

56. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by a fastening element extending therethrough.

57. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein each of the at least a majority of the first portion of cutting elements comprises an elongated body having an upper end comprising a cutting element and a lower end configured to extend through a recess formed in the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit, the elongated body being affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by way of the lower end thereof.

58. (Original) The casing bit of claim 57, the lower ends of the elongated bodies of the at least a majority of the first portion of cutting elements are affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by at least one of a threaded element, a weld, a braze joint, and a pin.

59. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements comprises an elongated body having an upper end comprising a cutting element and a lower end configured to extend through a recess formed in the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit, the elongated body of the one or more cutting elements being affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by way of the lower end thereof.

60. (Original) The casing bit of claim 59, wherein the lower end of the elongated body of the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by at least one of a threaded element, a weld, a braze joint, and a pin.

61. (Original) The casing bit of claim 46, wherein the at least a majority of the first portion of cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by a braze material exhibiting a liquidus temperature of, at most, about 1305° Fahrenheit.

62. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the one or more cutting elements is affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by a braze material exhibiting a liquidus temperature of, at most, about 1305° Fahrenheit.

63. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising at least one groove that is sized and configured to preferentially facilitate failure of at least a portion of the casing bit.

64. (Original) The casing bit of claim 63, wherein the at least one groove comprises a plurality of grooves sized and configured to preferentially facilitate failure of at least a portion of the casing bit into sections.

65. (Currently Amended) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the nose portion of the casing bit comprises one or more fibers disposed within a matrix material.

66. (Original) The casing bit of claim 65, wherein the one or more fibers is circumferentially oriented.

67. (Original) The casing bit of claim 65, wherein the one or more fibers is oriented concentrically or spirally.

68. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising at least one sensor for measuring a condition of drilling, a condition of the casing bit, or a formation characteristic.

69. (Currently Amended) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein the casing bit comprises an outer shell and at least one inner core, the outer shell extending over substantially the entire nose portion of the casing bit.

70. (Original) The casing bit of claim 69, wherein the outer shell comprises at least one of steel, iron alloys, tungsten carbide powder infiltrated with a copper based binder, and nickel alloys and the at least one inner core comprises at least one of aluminum, brass, bronze, or phenolic.

71. (Original) The casing bit of claim 69, wherein the outer shell and the at least one inner core are affixed to one another by at least one of fasteners, welding, and brazing.

72. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of a leading face of a blade of the plurality of blades of the casing bit is formed from a superabrasive material.

73. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising:
at least one of an incendiary agent, an explosive agent, a reactive chemical, and an abrasive

material;

wherein the at least one of an incendiary agent, an explosive agent, a reactive chemical, and an abrasive material is configured to render the casing bit more drillable.

74. (Original) The casing bit of claim 1, further comprising an integral stem section including at least one of a float valve mechanism, a frangible region, a cementing stage tool, a float collar mechanism, and a landing collar structure.

Claims 75 through 178 (Cancelled)

179. (Currently Amended) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

a plurality of discrete cutting element retention structures disposed on the nose portion, wherein each discrete cutting element retention structure is configured to carry a single cutting element; and

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit.

180. (Currently Amended) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

a plurality of cutting elements affixed to the nose portion, configured for causing failure in the formation by contact therewith; and

at least one gage section configured to define an outermost radius of the casing bit, the at least

one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit, the at least one gage section configured to extend longitudinally adjacent at least a portion of a casing section when the casing section is secured to the casing bit.

181. (Original) The casing bit of claim 180, further comprising an integral stem section extending longitudinally from the nose portion of the casing bit.

182. (Original) The casing bit of claim 181, wherein the integral stem section comprises at least one of a frangible region, a float valve mechanism, a cementing stage tool, a float collar mechanism, or a landing collar structure.

183. (Original) The casing bit of claim 180, wherein the outer profile comprises a substantially symmetrical profile, with respect to a longitudinal axis of the casing bit.

184. (Original) The casing bit of claim 180, wherein the plurality of cutting elements comprises polycrystalline diamond stud-type cutting elements.

185. (Original) The casing bit of claim 180, wherein the plurality of cutting elements comprises percussion inserts.

186. (Original) The casing bit of claim 185, wherein the percussion inserts comprise at least one of cemented tungsten carbide and diamond.

187. (Cancelled)

188. (Cancelled)

189. (New) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit;

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries a plurality of cutting elements affixed thereto, the plurality of cutting elements comprising:

a first plurality of cutting elements configured to initially engage and drill through a first region and to substantially wear away while drilling through the first region; and

a second plurality of cutting elements configured to engage and drill through a second region to be subsequently encountered by the casing bit.

190. (New) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit; and

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries one or more cutting elements affixed thereto, at least one of the one or more cutting elements being affixed to the at least one of the plurality of blades of the casing bit by electrically disbonding material.

191. (New) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, a nose portion, and at least one groove sized and configured to preferentially facilitate failure of at least a portion of the casing bit into

sections;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit; and

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries one or more cutting elements affixed thereto.

192. (New) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion, at least a portion of the nose portion comprising one or more fibers disposed within a matrix material;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit; and

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries one or more cutting elements affixed thereto.

193. (New) A casing bit for drilling a casing section into a subterranean formation, comprising:

a casing bit having an inner profile, an outer profile, and a nose portion;

at least one aperture formed in the nose portion of the casing bit and configured for delivering drilling fluid from an interior of the casing bit to an exterior thereof;

at least one gage section, the at least one gage section extending longitudinally from adjacent the nose portion of the casing bit;

a plurality of generally radially extending blades disposed on the nose portion, wherein at least one of the plurality of blades carries one or more cutting elements affixed thereto; and

at least one of an incendiary agent, an explosive agent, a reactive chemical, and an abrasive

material, wherein the at least one of an incendiary agent, an explosive agent, a reactive chemical, and an abrasive material is configured to render the casing bit more drillable.